



California Sex Offender Management Board

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Telephone: (279) 223-2600 Web: www.casomb.org

May 15, 2025

Assemblywoman Alexandra M. Macedo
State Capitol Office
1021 O Street, Suite 5530
Sacramento, CA 94249-0033

RE: Assembly Bill 1437

Dear Assembly Member Macedo and Members of the Assembly Committee on Public Safety,

The California Sex Offender Management Board (CASOMB) has been following Assembly Bill 1437 and has determined that it would be important to contribute to the deliberation about whether to pass this proposed legislation through the Public Safety Committee.

CASOMB approaches its legislative mandates by harnessing the strengths of its members, made up of dedicated subject matter experts representing various sectors of the criminal justice system, treatment and intervention services, and advocacy groups. In 2019 CASOMB authored the Juvenile Guidelines, discussing evidence-based research regarding best practice as it relates to the adjudication, supervision, and treatment of youth with problematic sexual behavior. The Board also provided guidance on two legal consequences, one being the use of registration with juveniles. After a thorough review of the research, the Board recommended that California stop requiring registration for juveniles whose only sexual offending was under the age of 18.

Juveniles should not be treated like adults and their low re-offense rates and amenability to treatment and rehabilitation are widely supported through research. Registration for juveniles has not been found to deter sexual re-offending nor benefit or increase public safety. Research shows the "vast majority of juvenile sex crimes committed in any given time period are perpetrated by juveniles with no prior sexual offense adjudications." Years of recidivism research also highlight the very low risk of reoffending youth who commit sexual based offenses. When measured at five years after release from custody only 2.75% of youth recidivated. This means that 97% of these youth do not re-offend sexually.

Research also supports that specialized treatment is effective for reducing the risk of sexual recidivism. Participation in well designed and implemented treatment, tailored to the specific needs of each juvenile, has been shown to further reduce the already low risk of recidivism for this population of youth who commit sexual offenses.

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A vast amount of research highlights many counterproductive and unintended consequences of juvenile registration. This includes the potential for increased risk of recidivism, that comes from utilizing registration with youth with problematic sexual behavior. Youth on the registry are at a greater risk of having mental health disorders, including depression and a higher risk for suicide. Registration promotes isolation and takes them away from developing protective factors such as: prosocial family and peer relationships, prosocial activities, and an opportunity to participate in healthy, age-appropriate positive developmental milestones. Youth who must register are more likely to experience harassment, physical violence, bullying, difficulty in school, trouble maintaining stable housing, acquiring employment, and are more likely to have disordered pro-social development.

Community safety continues to be a primary focus of CASOMB, and with that in mind, recommends an alternative approach to increase public safety and provide continuity of care across the state. CASOMB continues to recommend that youth who commit sexually abusive behavior be placed under the purview of CASOMB. In 2022, CASOMB added two juvenile experts to the Board and in 2022 authored "Guidelines for Treating and Supervising Youth Who Have Committed a Sexual Offense" in preparation for this change.

Based on research, CASOMB opposes AB 1437 or any other legislation which aims to reinstate registration for juveniles who commit sexual offenses. CASOMB, along with the largest international group, the Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse (ATSA) take the position that registration and notification laws are not appropriate for youth convicted of a sexual crime and this practice should be eliminated. Efforts to increase public safety and build healthier communities should involve evidenced based interventions such as therapeutic treatment programs, education, family support, and a collaborative team made of supervising agencies and treatment providers. These approaches aim to address the underlying issues that lead to inappropriate sexual behavior and equip young people with tools to make better decisions and reintegrate successfully into our communities.

In summary, sex offender registration for crimes committed by juveniles does not increase public safety and has many negative and unintended consequences which further impede the prosocial development and mental health of these youth. Additionally having juvenile registration would require significant new expenditures when all factors are considered, including probation supervision, maintenance of lists, public defender costs, and others, without any expected public benefit.

Sincerely,

The Members of the California Sex Offender Management Board